

Weekly National Security Working Group Update

Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman
Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ), NSWG Chairman

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The National Security Working Group (NSWG) is comprised of Trent Franks, 2nd, AZ; Connie Mack, 14th, FL; Duncan Hunter, 52nd, CA; Allen West, 22nd, FL and John Fleming, 4th, LA. We look forward to providing RSC members updates on national security issues and matters using this forum. We welcome your inputs.

- Russia retorts to Missile Defense site in Romania (Rep Franks)

Yesterday it was reported that Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated in an interview with a Serbian newspaper that if the U.S. ignores Russia's position on missile defense, Russia will need to take military-technical measures. While Lavrov conceded that Moscow wants to continue a missile defense dialogue with U.S. and NATO he stated, "...if our partners continue to ignore our position, we will have to ensure our own security interests using other methods.... Forced retaliatory military-technical measures may be needed." This statement was provoked by US plans to deploy a missile defense site in Romania as part of its Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA). Moscow is concerned that the PAA will threaten its national security and strategic forces interests, and wants legally binding guarantees that the PAA will not conflict with these interests. However, U.S. and NATO have been slow to sign any legally binding document that would limit their missile defense capabilities in the region.

We must remain committed to our missile defense interests in Europe and not back down to Russian rhetoric of retaliation. This site in Romania will be an integral part in protecting our interests and allies from hostile short and medium range missiles from those that wish us harm, including an increasing threat from Iran. We must not pander to Russia's cries of foul, especially as it expands its inventory and role of nuclear weapons in the aftermath of the New START Treaty. While our relationship with Russia is significant, we cannot make concessions on this grand a scale that will leave our friends and our security to the bears.

NSWG Contact: Drew Nishiyama, Drew.Nishiyama@mail.house.gov, 5-4576

- United States Cuts Funding to UNESCO (Rep Fleming)

On October 31, 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) voted to admit Palestine as a member state. Palestine was admitted by a vote of 107-14, with 52 abstentions, and the United States, Israel, and Germany among the "no" votes. According to *The Washington Post*, U.S. law dating back to 1990 and 1994 prohibits the U.S. from funding any UN organization that grants full membership to any group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood.^[1] In accordance with this law, the Obama Administration announced that it would not be making the scheduled November payment of \$60 million to UNESCO, which accounts for 22% of its budget.

This is the latest attempt by the Palestinian Authority to circumvent bilateral negotiations with Israel to achieve statehood at the UN. As long as the Palestinians refuse to conduct good-faith negotiations with Israel, and attempt to win unilateral recognition at the UN instead, real peace and a permanent settlement will remain as elusive as ever. The lopsided vote also illustrates the failure of the Obama Administration to keep a united front with some of our closest allies, such as the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy and France. The United States needs to reassert its leadership on the global stage, and it can start by leveraging our considerable contributions to demand critical reforms at the UN.

NSWG Contact: Sean Varner, Sean.Varner@mail.house.gov, 5-2777

- China's Push into Latin America Leaves U.S. on the Outside Looking In (Rep Mack)

As China continues to uphold their trade barriers with the United States and focuses on solidifying economic ties to countries in Latin America, Members of Congress have expressed concern for the future of U.S. businesses in this region. China maintains their currency, the yuan, at a low value relative to the dollar in order to boost its shipments to other countries and to constrain Chinese purchases overseas. This strategy has created disadvantages for U.S. companies working to expand their trade opportunities in the region.

^[1] Colum Lynch, "UNESCO votes to admit Palestine; U.S. pulls funding," *The Washington Post*, 1 November 2011.

The strengthened financial relationship between China and Latin America has created a shift of power and influence in the Western Hemisphere. Chinese trade with Latin America has experienced double digit annual growth since 2006 while U.S. foreign direct investment in Latin America has dropped significantly. Chinese economic growth has increased through various sovereign wealth fund investments such as loans to Brazil's energy sector and to pension funds in Argentina. China has also shown a willingness to cooperate with and invest in countries like Venezuela that are opposed to U.S. security and democratic initiatives. Investment in Venezuela means significant risk for China as it finds itself partnering with those opposed to U.S. interests while gambling on a fragile economy and volatile political environment. Confronted by these risks, China's willingness to push ahead should make U.S. policymakers sit up and take notice. China has signaled that it is willing to compete for influence and economic power in Latin America with little regard for U.S. interests or priorities.

NSWG Contact: Kristin Jackson, Kristin.Jackson@mail.house.gov, or 5-2536 in Rep Mack's office.

- Left Unsaid in Defense Budget Cuts Debate: Defense Technology is More Expensive Today than it was Ten Years Ago (Rep Hunter)

Whether you see the defense budget as the ideal place to find savings or an area that needs to be protected from further cuts, we can all agree that when we send our brave men and women into harm's way, the most powerful nation in the world should have the best equipped force on the battlefield. I can remember when I was a young Marine Lieutenant in Iraq in 2004 collecting scrap metal to weld to the side of our vehicles to protect against RPGs and IEDs. While lawmakers and the American public were outraged over this, individuals from both sides of the defense budget debate spoke out in support of ensuring our military men and women have the protective equipment they need while serving in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the reality of the costs associated with this necessary equipment is often ignored, or, can become inconvenient when other priorities like entitlement spending are being debated.

Take for example the most basic of defense spending, the individual combat load of each soldier or Marine. In 2000, the basic rifleman's suite, which at the time included key items such as a standard Kevlar helmet, basic flak jacket, M16A2 rifle, and other basic clothing items, cost the government approximately \$5,500 per individual. In 2010, after ten years of combat testing of equipment and countless lessons learned, the rifleman's suite now includes key items such as M16A4 rifle with Combat Optic scope, a modular tactical vest with body armor plates, a lightweight Kevlar helmet with increased protection against fragmentation and small arms fire, night vision goggles, tactical intra squad radio and flame resistant clothing at a cost of approximately \$15,680 per individual. That is an increase of over \$10,000 per soldier or Marine. Nowhere within that rifleman's suite is there any excess equipment, luxuries, or "nice-to-have" items. This is the basic combat load that give ours warfighters the best chance to accomplish their mission and return home safely to their family. If we want the best equipped soldier and Marine with the most advanced technology on the battlefield, we have to be willing to properly fund the Department of Defense.

NSWG Contact: Jimmy Thomas, jimmy.thomas@mail.house.gov, 5-5672

- Obama Administration Reviews All Counterterrorism Training Materials (Rep Jordan)

In response to media reports about training materials which some Muslims found offensive, the Obama administration has begun a comprehensive review of all training materials for law enforcement and the national security community, Deputy U.S. Attorney James Cole confirmed in a speech to the George Washington University Law School on Wednesday, October 19. The allegations were first raised in a Wired magazine blog report by a reporter married to an ACLU employee. The materials referenced as potentially offensive were used on one occasion in an elective class for experienced counterterrorism agents, and the instructor was not retained by the FBI. Instead of targeting its investigation and any potential response to that particular class or instructor, the administration has bowed to pressure from Muslim groups and opened a broad evaluation of all counterterrorism training efforts. Those concerns were raised by the Council on American Islamic Relations and other radical groups identified as Muslim Brotherhood front groups during the 2004 Holy Land Foundation terror-financing trial. There are reports that the evaluation process will include feedback from those groups on the FBI's existing and future training materials, and those groups will help vet future counterterrorism instructors. While good policing requires strong relationships with the Muslim community, cooperation with groups connected to the Muslim Brotherhood is dangerous. Looking to those groups for counterterrorism guidance is another step in the wrong direction for an administration that has already failed to clearly identify the threat of Islamist terrorism and avoided identifying a terrorism suspect as Muslim in his indictment.

NSWG Contact: Cyrus Artz, Cyrus.Artz@mail.house.gov, 6-0718

Questions/comments regarding RSC NSWG items can be directed to Cyrus Artz at Cyrus.Artz@mail.house.gov